DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 139 868 UD 016 995

AUTHOR Pendergraft, Margot Jenkins
TITLE Resistance to Change in an Alternative Secondary School.
INSTITUTION Educational Services Group, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Nov 75
CONTRACT 400-76-0005
NOTE 63p.; For a related document see UD 016 996

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Advisory Committees; *Change Strategies; Community Involvement; *Educational Alternatives; Negative Attitudes; Nongraded Classes; Open Education; Senior High Schools; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS Minneapolis Public Schools; Minnesota (Minneapolis); *Resistance to Change

ABSTRACT

This report examines the efforts of a secondary school to develop comparable alternatives to those implemented at the elementary level in one Chicago school. Specifically, it examines the decision-making process of the staff to develop a 9-12 open school within the high school. The report traces the history of innovation in the high school and identifies the organizational and cultural constraints on educational change. Some problems of the secondary school staff are examined. These include problems of definition, loyalties to the existing subject-matter departments and administrative constraints. (Author)

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# RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IN AN ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL

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UD 016995

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A report submitted to the
National Institute of Education
pursuant to Contract No. 400-76-0005.

November 1975

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1971, the southeast area of Minneapolis became one of the experimental school sites of the National Institute of Education with five years' funding to put into effect alternative education in its local schools. Each of the three elementary schools implemented a different alternative: contemporary or self-contained classroom, continuous progress or ungraded, and open. (A free school, graded K-12, was also inaugurated.) The secondary school (originally grades 7-12, now 6-12) had the task of absorbing all three elementary alternatives and addressing them in some manner in a secondary setting.

There is increasing world-wide interest in alternative education. (See Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Alternative Educational Futures In The United States And In Europe, 1972.) The visitors from Canada, South America, Europe, and Japan who parade through the Southeast Minneapolis schools to view alternatives in action give concrete proof of this interest. There is a need, however, to be aware that the introduction of alternatives into an existing school culture can and most likely will produce change in that culture. The most frequent response to that change at the secondary level is resistance.

Secondary teachers are conditioned through credentialing procedures to assume the role of expert in a subject area. This locks them, for the most part, into a position which they hesitate to change. Resistance to change is a survival tactic because change threatens disclosure of the weaknesses in their academic expertise, elicits new demands on their time, and challenges their flexibility. Their reaction is to stay

with the status quo and learn to live with the heritage of the accompanying "endemic uncertainties" (Lortie, 1975:134-61) of ease of entry and inadequate preparation for the profession, unstepped careers, and the isolation of the classroom (so no one finds out you really do not know everything about history or math or chemistry). These uncertainties can, however, lead to anxiety and self-doubt which further reduce a teacher's effectiveness and tends to deny to her/him the rewards of success and fulfillment.

Secondary administrators shore up their defenses against change by accepting only programs that can be easily adapted by the school routine and working with parents and teachers who share their bias. Anything else could lead to self-doubt of the system and their place in it (Vidich and McReynolds, 1971:206).

> Such self-doubt would be a necessary part of an honest confrontation of the problems that might allow principals to come to terms with the predicament in which they find themselves. It would probably require that they become educators rather than administrators, innovators rather than bureaucrats, and would endanger the collective alliance that they have established with one another and other defenders of the established system (Vidich and McReynolds, 1971:207).

This study will explore the problems inherent in culture change in a secondary school. It involves the daily deliberation of a committee of five teachers charged with developing an innovative program, i.e., introduction of open education into Marshall-University High School for grades 9-12. The results of this study are restricted to the data gathered during a time span of three months (winter trimester), as well as observations and interviews with concerned persons that have taken place since August 15, 1974.

## II. THEORY PERTAINING TO CULTURE CHANGE AND SCHOOLS

The literature on culture change is extensive and there will be no attempt in this study to review it comprehensively. For an overview, the reader is referred to the "Introduction" by Paul Bohannan in Beyond the Frontiers, Social Process and Cultural Change (1967:xi-xvii). For the purposes of this study, however, several research sources that are applicable to the problem are addressed.

### Some Aspects of Culture Change Theory

Although some societies appear to the outside observer to remain static, Spicer in Human Problems In Technical Change contends that constant change is the rule rather than the exception. "Understanding that change is a process which people are undergoing all the time, gives us a vantage point from which to view conscious effort to alter culture" (1952:18). His tools of change include application of the concepts of culture, social organization, and innovation, with constant vigilance as to the cultural bias of the innovator (1952:289-93). Spicer approaches reduction of resistance by finding ways of establishing a sense of need and devising means by which the members of the culture can participate in bringing about change (1952:292-93).

Goodenough has operationalized the process by establishing a set of principles centered around optimum procedures to be employed by development (change) agents (1963:22-23):

1. Development proposals and procedures should be mutually consistent.

2. Development agents must have a thorough knowledge of the main values and principal features of the client community's culture.

3. Development must take the whole community into account.

4. The goals of development must be stated in terms that have positive value to the community's members. They must be something they, as well as the agent, want.

5. The community must be an active partner in the development process.

6. Agents should start with what the community has in the way of material, organizational, and leadership resources.

7. Development procedures must make sense to the community's members at each step.

8. The agent must earn the respect of the community's members for himself as a person.

9. The agent should try to avoid making himself the indispensable man in the development situation.

10. Where there are several agents at work, good communication and coordination between them and their respective agencies is essential.

What Goodenough is advocating are measures to reduce resistance to culture change. Adherence to these procedures will not guarantee success; they could maximize probabilities for it.

The concept of prestige or status is cited by Erasmus (1961) as the tool to promote culture change. Desire for social recognition, he contends, activates the individual into accepting innovation which will produce change. Voluntary and individual acceptance are considered by Erasmus as positive control by which the individual effects changes

in his environment through alternative behavior. Obligations to the society are negative controls. Culture change is assured greater success when coupled with positive controls (1961:324).

To summarize, culture is changing constantly and the way it changes can be directed. There is more assurance of success in effecting a prescribed culture change when the client community feels the need for change, participates in it voluntarily, gains status from it, and is guided by a change agent who is cognizant of and employs principles such as those cited by Goodenough.

## Education and Culture Change

Establishing a "sense of the need" to change, that Spicer addresses, comes up against formidable resistance in the bureaucracy known as a school. Henry recognized this when he described the three functions of such a bureaucracy: (1) to carry out the task for which it is established, (2) to prevent anything within it from changing, (3) to perpetuate itself. "Under these conditions it is difficult to introduce new knowledge into the system. Often only a general convulsion in the total society can compel a bureaucracy to change; and then it will do so only just enough to avoid going out of business" (1966:20).

The reluctance of schools to voluntarily undergo culture change is explored by Spindler (1963) as it pertains to groups within the school. Rapid change in American values since World War II has produced a dichotomy between what Spindler termed traditional and emergent values. He has placed groups associated with schools (i.e., school boards, general public and

parents, school administrators, teachers, and students) on a continuum in relation to their tendencies towards these value categories. Conflict and confusion among these groups and their differing values have produced uneven shifts of change in education (1963:132-46).

The situation that Spindler describes can be further compared to Bateson's progressive differentiation or schismogenesis. Writing in 1935, he discussed groups that have the same aspirations and behavior patterns, but have differentiated orientations towards these patterns (Bohannan and Plog, Eds., 1967:187-98). Thus in the school context, there are groups whose orientation is more traditional and other groups whose orientation is more emergent. They may be symmetrical as in groups of traditional and emergent teachers, or complementary as in groups of administrators and teachers. Stabilization of the relationships of these groups must be fostered to prevent rivalry, hostility, and an irreparable split in the social structure. Therefore, the development or change agent, in attempting to introduce change in the school system, must recognize and deal with these divergent groups and the bureaucratic structure. He must endeavor to maintain equilibrium and gain time for the change to be effective. This could be compared to the practice of using Peace Corps personnel as buffers to allow emergent members of the dominant traditional society time for acquisition of self-confidence and the skills to effect change in developing countries.

Resistance to Change in Schools

The approach of the federal government in assisting innovation and change in schools has been to introduce incentives through funding and the prestige for a school system of being a fore-runner in education. Sarason (1971) sees this as an ends-mean-ends process. Ideal ends are conceptualized with means developed to achieve those ends. The means, in turn, through actualization with all the unforeseen effects determine what the ends will look like. The results seldom match those intended. Added to this is the problem of resistance to change. "There is nothing unusual in the fact that many of those who comprise school culture do not seek change or react enthusiastically to it. In this respect school people are no different than those who make up any culturally distinct organization. The significance of the fact resides in the sources and nature of resistance and how these affect the means-end problem" (1971:9). The instigators of change are often unaware or ill-equipped to deal with the complexity of the situation.

Resistance takes on many shapes and comes from many directions. Robert L. Foster, while Superintendent of Schools in Berkeley, CA, gave an analysis of some of the areas of resistance. Teachers who are innovators are often squelched by administrators who see teacher creativity as a threat to the institution. Universities are threatened because change in schools could affect their credentialing systems. Those teachers who are not self-actualizing work hard to see that they stay in the majority. They pressure principals to hire teachers acceptable to them. "There is a method in most schools, especially secondary schools, to preserve the system;

it is called department heads. Department heads tend to hire in their own image to be sure they get what they want--colleagues who will not outclass them..." (Saylor, Ed., 1972:13).

The successful implementation of innovation leading to change in education is dependent on several factors, all or a combination of which may be present in any given situation. French (1972) gives some examples of describing the failure of an open-space school that thought it was well-prepared for its innovation. The administrator was hand-picked. (The principal had political influence and wanted the prestige of a new school.) The staff said yes; they also liked the idea of the new school. A four week workshop was conducted the summer before school started, to prepare for the opening of this brand new school. But, the decision for an open-space school did not come from the community, teachers, or the students. There was no grass roots support. Instead of four weeks, it was estimated that a year of planning by the staff was necessary for personalities to be uncovered, personal priorities aired, and commitment or non-commitment of the staff to an open education-type curriculum be discovered. Without commitment, dissension eventually created Bateson's (1935) schismogenesis to the point of complete collapse of the program. An evaluation of the failure also strongly recommended that the principal designated for such a school be trained in open education, and the choice of that principal be made regardless of tenure or district politics.

The committee of teachers, in this study, were involved in the introduction of a new program into the secondary school setting. That introduction constituted culture change and brought with it the problems

of resistance peculiar to schools and inherent in this particular school. The resistance was present both within and outside of the committee, nullifying their change agent role according to the principles Goodenough (1963) has proposed. While they were being asked to participate in change (Spicer, 1952), there was no basis for their efforts from a "felt sense of need." The task had been imposed on them. Lack of status in their role, because of the circumstances of the committee's inception, illustrates the absence of Erasmus' (1961) incentives for change and addresses Foster's (1972) observations concerning perpetuation of the system.

Neither could the principal be considered a change agent. He expressed neither knowledge nor empathy for the program whose implementation was his responsibility (French, 1972). His efforts mirrored the maintenance of the secondary school structure through bureaucratic resistance to change (Henry, 1966), directed by an individual with traditional values (Spindler, 1963).

If anything could be labeled as "the change agent," it might be the National Institute of Education (NIE), the primary source of funds and status. However, the NIE is far removed from the actual process of change. There is an awareness that ends envisioned rarely match ends achieved, especially at the secondary level (Sarason, 1971). But, the facts and source of resistance are rarely made poignantly known to that distant instigator of educational change. This study will add to the limited literature and provide an intimate and in-depth exploration of the problems that embody resistance and their relationships to the process of change in Marshall-University High School.

## III. THE RESEARCH SETTING

Each research setting is unique. The environment, history of events, and circumstances that lead up to the entree of the researcher are important to give the reader an understanding of the influences at play in the research setting. Each school has an environment and a history and is, in part, influenced by them.

### The School and Its Environs

Marshall-University High School (MUH), constructed in 1924, is a square, three-story brick building that sits on the edge of Dinkytown, a small shopping area in Southeast Minneapolis. Three floors and a basement house grades 7-12 and those sixth graders from two elementary alternatives, Marcy Open and Pratt Continuous Progress, who are judged mature enough and who want to come to MUH. (Tuttle Contemporary also has the option to send sixth graders to MUH, but has chosen not to exercise it.)

Most southeast students enter Marshall-University High School, but there is also a large population of students (approximately 33%) from other parts of the city through the urban transfer and open enrollment systems. This includes about 150 Blacks out of approximately 1,000 students. Marshall-University High School is also the city's secondary school for the physically handicapped. These students are mainstreamed (enrolled in regular classes) where possible but there are also some adaptive classes.

In September 1974, the school directory listed 125 staff members from principal to paid-aide and included nurses, engineers, cafeteria employees,

counselors, and secretaries. Sixty members of the staff were classroom teachers.

Southeast Minneapolis includes a mixture of industry, commercial development, multi-unit, and single-family dwellings. Dinkytown, a prominant shopping area, is two blocks wide and two blocks long. This could describe many urban neighborhoods in large metropolitan cities. The one factor that has great influence on the demographic composition of southeast Minneapolis is the presence of the University of Minnesota two blocks from MUH on the other side of Dinkytown. According to French (1974), the southeast area has seen little population growth in the last thirty-five years. However, the population of people in the 25-44 age bracket has declined and there has been a sharp increase in the 20-24 age bracket. The University also accounts for a small population of oriental students. The percentage of Blacks in southeast Minneapolis (2%) is even smaller than it is in the rest of the city (5%). There is a young mobile population, related to the presence of the University, super-imposed on a more sedentary blue-collar and professional population of long-standing.

## Recent History of the School

To better understand Marshall-University High School as a research setting, it is necessary to retreat ten years and relate the school's recent history. As the population shift, age-wise, began to be felt at the school-level, a solution was sought for the survival of the traditional neighborhood secondary school, Marshall High School. (The Uppgaard report,

Climate for Change, 1973, prepared for the Minneapolis Evaluation Team chronicles this history. It has been corroborated by interviews with teachers having more than ten years seniority in the building.) Marshall High School's nearest competition, two blocks away, then housed in Peik Hall on the university campus, was University High School, a lab school (grades 7-12). University High School had been in existence since 1908. Staffed by professors at the University, personnel working on advanced degrees, and practice teachers in the College of Education, it had an innovative curriculum.

Community concern about the status of Marshall High School led to the commission, in 1962, of a team from Michigan State University to study the situation. Their recommendation was the merger of Marshall and University High Schools.

In 1966, the principal of Marshall High School, who as a teacher had joined the staff in 1934, retired. The new principal began to introduce innovation and exchange programs with University High School. At the same time, major problems were being worked out between the University and Minneapolis Public Schools concerning the merger.

The merger took place in September, 1968, with seemingly little practical preparation to implement the merger theory. Two different sub-cultures were brought together: the education "elitists" and the blue-collar "jocks." In addition, an integration policy was implemented by Minneapolis Public Schools during the fall semester at Marshall-University High School that added fifty Black students through urban transfer to the eighty already at the two schools. These transfer students came from a low socio-economic inner-city high school, North High. Teachers reacted by

perceiving that they were having to deal with North High School's undesirables. Blacks were expected to unite regardless of their socio-economic and educational backgrounds. University High School Blacks felt intimidated. White students polarized into integration and non-integration camps. Added to this was violent outside intervention by non-school Blacks, and general student unrest over the Viet Nam controversy that spilled over from the university campus. Students, parents, and staff worked to improve the climate of the school. There was some success, but students from low socio-economic areas dropped out, drugs were prevalent, and truancy was a serious problem. By spring 1971, many of these problems had reached major proportions.

In 1970, the wave of concern about public education that had been mounting for a decade was rewarded with the establishment of the Experimental Schools Program (ESP) in the U. S. Office of Education. (Later ESP was put under the auspices of the National Institute of Education.) Southeast Minneapolis, mainly through the organized efforts of the then current director-principal of MUH, submitted a proposal and won acceptance to have the area federally-funded to test the "efficacy of comprehensive change" (Sea 1971-76 Comprehensive Plan, 1973:3). Marshall-University High School entered its fourth year since the merger involved in another set of problems and priorities aimed this time at fulfilling its role as an alternative.

Marshall-University High School as an Alternative

The first year as an alternative, 1971-72, showed little difference in the school program. Mechanical changes included a quarter system instead of semesters, self-registration system, organized open enrollment, and accurate attendance records (Uppgaard, 1973:38). Ungraded English courses in the Senior high and a team approach in the junior high were pre-Southeast Alternatives (SEA) innovations that were continued and refined. Two experimental programs of thirty students each, A Wilderness and Research Experience (AWARE) and Off-Campus Learning Experience (OCLE) were begun (Uppgaard, 1973).

The greatest area of change has taken place in the Transitional Program or junior high (grades 6-8).* Three choices of modes of education (graded, ungraded, open) became a reality by September, 1974 (Ryba, 1975). Each of these modes has attempted to provide a transition for students coming from each of the three elementary schools into Marshall-University High School. They were implemented only when the number of elementary students with these educational backgrounds began to swell and there was pressure to do so.

The senior high has retained its pre-SEA departmental structure. Offerings within the departments are essentially non-graded, however, with students in grades 9-12 able to take most classes (if they have satisfied prerequisites). Also, a broad range of curricular offerings were made possible with government funding for course development. Current problems include cutbacks in courses as that funding is continually reduced. (The end of the Experimental Schools Program is June, 1976.)

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*The terms Transitional Program/junior high/middle school have been used at various times by school officials or appeared in formal documents. In this study, all these terms refer to grades 6-8.

Some special programs have taken shape at the senior high level. Project AWARE was begun the first year. With an emphasis on group interaction and personal responsibility, it had come the closest, prior to fall 1975, to an open education program at the senior high level. Lack of funding has allowed this successful program to be reduced to perhaps only one trimester for year 1975-76 and that is not assured.

Urban arts allows students to work with artists to improve the students' craft. Internships are included in this city-wide program.

For students who found that their needs were not met by the conventional classroom situation, OCLE offered an opportunity to learn while doing. Its funds were eliminated in 1974-75 and it has faded out of existence.

Role as On-Site Evaluator

Two levels of evaluation are built into the SEA contract with the National Institute of Education. Level I is an internal on-site formative evaluation service to the Southeast Alternative Area of the Minneapolis Public Schools. The Level I evaluators monitor and give immediate feedback on the progress, success, and feasibility of the alternative school's program.

Level II, the Minneapolis Evaluation Team (MET), provides external summative evaluation to the Experimental Schools Program of the NIE. (MET is a component of Educational Services Group, Inc., of Minneapolis.) Funded separately from SEA, MET is charged with evaluating the alternatives longitudinally as well as horizontally. Thematic premises being examined are choice, community-input, innovation and learning community (Nelson and Giannotta, 1974:vi-vii).

The first approach taken by MET in its evaluation efforts was an impact/documentation design. This approach was redesigned as the complexity and scope of the project were fully realized. Three anthropologists were added to the staff and an emphasis on field research with one field worker per school was initiated. In addition to impact and anthropological studies, a community studies division of the evaluation was inaugurated. (Community studies is also under the leadership of an anthropologist.)

In the summer of 1974, the field researcher for Marshall-University High School left the team and was replaced by the author. Requirements for the position included an MA or near completion with anthropological field work in educational or complex urban settings. The author's qualifications fulfilled the requirements including a secondary teaching credential and classroom experience in a northern California high school. That teaching experience and maturity (early forties) were valuable assets for entree into the field.

The principal at MUH was new and made an effort to accommodate me by facilitating attendance at teachers' orientation meetings before school began. He also granted a request for a mail-box and receipt of all school hand-outs.

Participation in orientation meetings introduced the necessary procedures. It was also an excellent opportunity to begin acquaintance with the staff. When one teacher had a time conflict during registration of students, I was able to volunteer and take her place. Without prior knowledge and experience with basic school procedures, it probably would not have been possible to volunteer services or, if it had, an uneasy, instead of natural, situation would have occurred.

In conversation with school personnel, the purpose of my presence was often questioned. Some teachers were aware of the levels of evaluation in the project; others only heard the word "evaluation" as a threat, having previously dealt with assessment of their personal teaching efforts. An explanation of my responsibilities assuaged curiosity and/or fears, but allusion in conversation to teaching and understanding the teacher's situation repeatedly gave me a much warmer reception.

Isolation of the Research Problem

Two of the areas on which MET was focusing research in the fall of 1974 were the participation of the community in the governance bodies of the schools, and the effect of the "wind-down" phenomena or depletion of federal funds approaching the completion of the project in June, 1976. Attendance at various meetings at MUH (e.g., faculty, principal's advisory council, department chairpersons, student senate, support personnel, etc.) to address the above foci aided understanding of the social structure of the school. It also gave access to the dynamics of the school's position as it related to both SEA and the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Two announcements by the principal on September 24, 1974, made to the department chairpersons, attracted attention and led to the focus of my research on culture change. The principal stated that Marshall-University High School would have some kind of open program for ninth grade beginning in the fall of 1975. The particulars of that program were to be worked out by a committee of teachers during winter trimester (December-March).

The principal's second statement dealt with the fact that reduction in federal monies and student population would result in ten to thirteen staff positions being eliminated in 1975-76. This meant that some teachers with less seniority in the senior high (grades 9-12) could be placed for a period or two in the Transitional Program or on the senior high open school committee, to "see if this was something they wanted to do." (Teachers at the junior high level had in most cases less seniority than senior high teachers. In essence, this would mean working at the junior high level for one period a day with a junior high teacher who he or she might one day replace.) Teachers were to let their chairpersons know if they were interested and arrangements to free-up time would be made in the winter trimester schedule. The principal was especially concerned that the staff in jeopardy be aware of the situation, know what some of their alternatives might be (i.e., absorption by the Transitional Program or proposed senior high open school), and that definite cuts in staff be announced by early 1975. The affected teachers would then have time available to seek placement elsewhere.

The creation of the open school committee presented a discrete, manageable research subject dealing with the introduction of culture change. Initially they were charged with "looking at" an open program for the 9th grade students. That original charge was eroded. This research is focused on the dynamics of the open school committee working daily through the problems of introducing yet another change into the culture of Marshall-University High School.

Methods of Research

Prior to the first day of the trimester, two of the open school committee members were contacted individually. Both of these teachers were department chairpersons and I was known to them through attendance at their meetings. Each was questioned on the time and place of the committee's meetings, and asked their feelings about my "sitting-in." Both gave an affirmative response.

With this groundwork established, I arrived the first meeting day with notepad and pencil in hand. Committee members who were not known exchanged introductions. The assistant principal for the Transitional Program (which includes open school, grades 6-8) was also present. (Amicable dealings with him had occurred early in the school year.) One previously unknown teacher wanted to know my position when it became apparent that members were to express their opinions candidly. (She expressed negative views of evaluation and evaluators.) The assistant principal assured her that he had never had any difficulty with the evaluators. I, in turn, assured the committee members that, when requested, opinions would not go out of the room. The following development eased the situation.

It soon became apparent that the group would need a chronicler and that it would reduce the participation of each of them if they tried to take notes too. I volunteered a copy of daily notes to the committee members to relieve them of that responsibility. I also stated that if there was anything offensive in the notes to make it known. That allowed them censorship (a prerogative they never exercised) and prepared the way

for a solid reciprocal relationship to develop. I now "belonged" in the open school committee.

This relationship to the members changed with time, which was a natural occurrence. I also made a conscious effort to influence the direction of that change. Informal conversation before and after meetings gave the opportunity to relate to each person as well as to the entire group. Each reference to such topics as teaching experiences, administrators I had known, adult children who had contributed to understanding of educational processes as they were growing up, and marital status, contributed to rapport within the group and their ability to identify me as a friendly interested observer rather than an intruder.

During the course of the research for this study, an ERIC search was made including the area of open secondary education. The ERIC search and several books they decided to read for open education philosophy background were loaned by the author. In addition, I acted as chauffeur on a field trip to an open school in St. Paul.

It is not necessary to belabor the importance of the researcher's relationship to the group s/he is observing. It is, however, vital to reduce skewing of data because of caution on the part of participants. As they are more natural and at ease, the machinations of the committee move (or get bogged down) naturally and the observer gets a truer picture of the process. Rapport also greatly enhances working conditions. Each member of the MET anthropology component assessed his/her abilities and the situation and became involved with their research community accordingly. (The ethnographers at Tuttle and Free Schools, for example,

taught mini courses and helped chaperone field trips.) Although detailed written notes were taken, it was necessary to rewrite them to be legible for other readers. The re-written notes were then xeroxed by the committee chairperson and copies initially distributed to the members, the aforementioned assistant principal, and the principal. Later, copies were given to the Level I evaluator as well.

The researcher's role became a combination of participant and process observer. As an ex-officio member of the committee, I received a copy of all materials distributed, participated on field trips, and on occasion was asked to recall and affirm statements or positions of persons called in as informants. The role could be compared to that of a court reporter: part of the process, but also detached from it.

Additional information was gleaned with open-ended interviews. According to Nelson and Giannotta, open-ended interviews are usually informal discussions about a pre-selected topic between informant and researcher (1974:xxi). In this case, the topic was interest in cultural change, which was broad enough to allow for questions in such areas as the school's history, reaction of teachers to alternatives, a comparison of teaching in a traditional and non-traditional classroom, and support of administration for the alternative programs. Words or phrases were jotted down during conversation when that was feasible. At the close of the interview, I found a quiet spot to recall and record as much as could be remembered. Discussing the interview with MET colleagues would often jar additional recollections. A tape recorder is more accurate than this method, but it was found a relaxed interview-conversation

elicited information that often would never find its way onto a recording tape. Choice of method, of course, is dictated by the situation.

In summary, the research method was (1) to make contact with influential members of the committee who knew my relationship to the school and ask their permission to observe, (2) to garner a reciprocal relationship, enhancing the sense of belonging, (3) to fortify that relationship by being non-threatening and cooperative, and (4) to make an effort to know and relate to each member of the committee. The technical methods of research were observation and open-ended interviews.

## IV. THE INCEPTION OF THE COMMITTEE

> In 1970 the national government approved the establishment of the Experimental Schools program in the Office of Education to test the efficacy of comprehensive change. Although no agreed upon definition of comprehensive change emerged, such variables as school organization and governance, curriculum development, the use of formative evaluation in decision-making, community and student involvement, and teacher training (broadly defined) were identified. While, to some, comprehensive meant an approach to school improvement, to others it has meant the products or results of implementing a combination of promising practices in concert. Comprehensive in this latter sense means the provision of sufficient educational options and alternatives so that all learners could meet with success in the programs of their choice. [Author's emphasis] It is to this latter concept that the Minneapolis Public Schools is committed. (SEA 1971-76 Comprehensive Plan, 1973:3)

### The Missing Link

The beginning of the fourth year of the project, fall 1974, found SEA looking down the tunnel of diminishing federal funds leading to cuts in personnel, materials, and services. Choice was available at three separate elementary schools for contemporary, continuous progress, and open education. Free school education (K-12) was still viable. As students across the city sought entrance to SEA's elementary components, Marshall-University High School, with continued diminishing enrollment problems, opened its doors to "mature and willing" sixth graders. Those opting for this arrangement were continuous progress and open education students. With the students came two sixth grade

grade teachers from Pratt Continuous Progress School and two from Marcy Open School.

In his opening day address, viewed and/or heard by school personnel throughout the city, the superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools stated that alternatives would be extended throughout the city as soon as possible and that at least one K-12 program would be in operation by September 1976. This statement was translated into a mandate for Marshall-University High School to develop an open school, grades 9-12, designed to provide the missing link in the continuity of alternatives (k-12).

The superintendent's mandate was influenced by at least three factors known to the researcher. The first factor involved the National Institute of Education and the progress of Southeast Alternatives. Minneapolis was considered the most successful site the NIE had funded. All the variables in the official doctrine had been addressed in some way, although there was a flaw in the K-12 continuity concept. That hazy area was Marshall-University High School. One member of an on-site visiting team for the NIE had stated in his report that he had observed that "there was little that would differentiate MUH from most high schools that I have worked in or visited" (O'Brien, 1973:3). Failing to address each of the alternatives was a negation of choice and non-fulfillment of the comprehensive K-12 concept. Through the director of Southeast Alternatives, the NIE stressed before school began in September 1974 that open education must be addressed at the 9-12 grade level. That would complete the model for SEA and fulfill the proposal originally accepted by the National Institute of Education.

Parents of Marcy Open School children were especially concerned. They were becoming aware of the fact that sixth graders at the beginning of the project (1971-72) were now ninth graders with no open school to attend. That condition would become more critical as children with a more extensive background in open education came of age to enter the senior high school. Choice K-12 was an integral part of the alternative doctrine and they wanted the opportunity to exercise that choice.

The third factor involved the increase in demands for alternatives throughout the city supporting solid growth in that direction. These students, also, would not remain forever in the elementary schools. Translation of alternatives into the secondary setting was necessary. Certainly Marshall-University High School had begun that task and was closest to fulfilling it. The non-graded senior high school met the needs of continuous progress and contemporary students. Only the open school program needed to expand to meet current and future demands.

Formation of the Planning Committee

The principal of Marshall-University High School began to transmit the planning schedule to the faculty early in the fall trimester. As stated in chapter III, the principal combined his request for interested individuals to be planners with the announcement that there would be staff cuts at the end of the school year, June 1975. These people, he added, might want to look at the 9-12 open school as a possible avenue for remaining at MUH.

The process of selecting the committee members was also contingent on who could be freed for a common period in the day. Class schedules in a high school often dictate procedures and participation.

As originally stated to all faculty, the committee was to be comprised of those persons who were interested in being involved in planning an open education program for the senior high. In reality, the principal designated that one person should come from each of four disciplines: math, science, social studies and English. Without explanation, an art person was added. The five found themselves on the committee for various reasons: either their department chairpersons had asked them to represent the department due to the schedule of their classes coinciding or, in the case of two members, they were department chairpersons who had taken the assignment because no one else in their departments wanted it or could rearrange their schedules. In addition, four of the five, including one of the department chairpersons, were vulnerable to being "cut" in June.

The principal structured the committee further by asking the math teacher to be chairperson and to keep a daily log. This teacher had helped write the 1973-76 program and budget proposals for SEA and had a reputation for being able to move the planning process along.

The Charge of the Principal

The principal had initially stated that interested persons should "look into the possibility" of a ninth grade open program for fall 1975 (Chairperson's Meeting, September 24, 1974). That small beginning burgeoned into a mandate from the superintendent and NIE by October 27, verbalized by

the principal and the director of SEA. At the second meeting of the committee (December 2, 1974), the question again arose if an option existed to find for non-feasibility of a 9-12 open school at MUH. The principal stated that there was no such option. This question was an outgrowth of the personal philosophy of all committee members. They were self-professed non-advocates of open education. Past experience with edicts "coming down from on high" was also at play here as well as department loyalties, which will be discussed later.

With the composition of the committee determined and the unequivocal fact again firmly established that there would be an open school at MUH in the fall of 1975, the principal proceeded to give the committee their initial charge:

1. Develop a program for 1975-76.
2. Plan for grades 9-12; grade or grades to be operationalized in 1975-76 at the option of the committee.
3. Consider where students will come from, who will be teaching, what will be taught, and incorporation of OCLE, AWARE, and Independent Study as action-learning concepts.
4. Follow a timetable of four weeks (January) to develop a skeleton, four weeks (February) to fill it in, presentation to faculty and department chairpersons for input, and completed planning document by March 7, the end of the winter trimester.

## The Process

The committee met daily, second hour, in a small conference room next to the library annex. Composed of three men and two women, they were teachers whose experience ranged from seven to forty-two years.

Their first perceived task was to become grounded in open education philosophy. Books were read, people involved in open schooling were invited to meet with the committee, and open classrooms were visited.

The principal and assistant principal for the Transitional Program met with the group. Suggestions from their individual perspectives and priorities contributed to the committee's deliberations at times and added to their constraints at others.

After the initial grounding, the group decided to individually write down their perspectives of open education. These short "stream of consciousness" papers were discussed and used as the basis of the first progress report in mid-January. This approximated the skeleton of the principal's charge.

Apprehension about cuts in personnel became more apparent as Christmas vacation ended and school reconvened. In mid-January three of the teachers, the chairperson plus two committee members, were called into the principal's office and informed that they were being surplussed. (This is jargon for being forced to change schools because of staff reduction, and the affected persons' seniority being less than other teachers in their departments. If they have tenure, every effort is made to place them elsewhere in the district.)

Part of the shock to those concerned was the fact that two seniority lists had taken the place of one. The senior and junior high staff had been separated. This allowed for retention of several junior high staff who had less seniority than senior high staff and eliminated the need to place senior high people into junior high programs. This did not effect the committee chairperson, who was under no pressure regarding future employment. The other two teachers had six and seven years in the Minneapolis Public Schools, one with seven years at MUH. It was a visible blow to them.

Internal tensions created by this event increased the difficulty of the committee to function smoothly. Interest in the planning diminished on the part of two of the teachers. In addition, on February 19, a fourth teacher, also a potential surplus staff member, was officially named as the one full-day open school teacher for fall 1975.

The committee was confounded in its function of filling in the details of the plan by five major problems (see Chapter V) as drawn from the data and isolated by the researcher. Progress took on the aspect of a trip through the fun house of a carnival. Courses of action led nowhere, obstacles kept appearing, and the end of the journey seemed to be pre-ordained.

The final draft of the committee's plan became a labor of the chairperson with input from the rest of the members. As they worked to more concisely fulfill their commitment, the problems and their powerlessness to resolve them became more apparent. The committee disbanded a week ahead of schedule in frustration. They handed in their final report, canceled a dinner meeting initiated by the principal a month earlier, and concluded their effort with the remark, "We didn't feel that we had anything to celebrate."

## V. THE COMMITTEE'S PROBLEMS

### What is Open Education?

The committee considered some issues more important than others. The criterion used to select the data was the frequency of verbalization of issues during meetings. Five major areas emerged as problems confronting the committee. The first major barrier was lack of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical concept to be operationalized, i.e., open education at the secondary level.

During the first meeting of the committee on December 2, 1974, all members stated that they were non-advocates of open education. With perhaps one exception, the art person, none of the members professed interest in, nor did they bring enthusiasm to the assigned task. They professionally perceived, however, their need to become grounded in open education philosophy, to enable them to address their charge.

The Level I and Level II evaluators for Marcy Open School were individually asked to attend a meeting. Both resource people referred the committee to the Bussis and Chittenden (1970:23) double classification scheme. This model characterizes open education as having high teacher and high student contribution to the decisions of content and the process of learning. Both visitors stressed the need for planned daily conference time among the 9-12 open school teaching staff and the flexibility to try a procedure, abandon it if it didn't work, and to then redesign. The teacher's role as facilitator in open education was also pointed out.

Inquiry of source material resulted in the committee acquiring copies of three books. Each of the five read one or more of the sources: Open Education: A Source Book For Parents And Teachers (Nyquist and Hawes, Eds., 1972), Crisis In The Classroom (Silberman, 1970), and The Open Classroom Reader (Silberman, Ed., 1973). Other sources brought into the committee's discussions of open education philosophy were Teaching As A Subversive Activity (Postman, Weingartner, 1969), Experience and Education (Dewey, 1938), and Freedom To Learn (Rogers, 1967).

Visits to open classrooms were also arranged. Journeys to Quincy, Illinois and Mankato, Minnesota were mentioned, but those trips did not materialize through committee neglect. (Funds for traveling and substitute stipends to cover their classes were available.) They did visit Marcy Open School, St. Paul (Minnesota) K-12 Open School, and the 6-8 open school of MUH. In addition, two teachers from the MUH 6-8 open school individually attended a committee meeting to share their experiences. One of the teachers, a recent addition to the staff from Marcy Open School, made a significant contribution to the entire committee with her demonstration of theme development.

As a result of this process of self-indoctrination in open education philosophy, three members of the committee noticeably shifted their attitude. The art and math persons moved to a more positive position and became the principal generators of ideas for implementation at the secondary level. The science person moved to a neutral stance. The English and social studies persons vacillated, but remained for the most part negative. They questioned the thematic approach to curriculum integration. They were also negative towards integration of math, and to a lesser degree, science. In addition,

the social studies person maintained an attitude towards the open school as a drop in/drop out situation rather than a bonafide alternative within the senior high school.

At the time of the visit of the MUH open school teacher and discussion of theme development (January 17), that concept was acceptable to the three members already mentioned as the best approach to implementing open education philosophy for grades 9-12. It carried with it a degree of continuity of process from Marcy Open School and the 6-8 open school at MUH. There was still hesitancy as to how the theme approach actually worked. The MUH open teacher demonstrated, with the committee participating, the techniques used in her open classroom, i.e., selection of an "umbrella" theme and development of topics that could come under that umbrella. The committee chose the theme of nationalism, and members generated topics at random which were then categorized by the teacher into curriculum areas. The committee was told that the students were likely to participate more fully, and more successfully if the teacher was sensitive to the students' interests and chose a theme incorporating those interests.

This demonstration seemed to dispel doubts and criticism of the theme approach. The enthusiasm of the meeting captured the committee members, including the two most dubious. (Ironically the teachers were being simultaneously informed that they were surplussed personnel.)

The visit of a professor in deliberate psychological education from the University of Minnesota, later in the trimester, afforded additional exposure to open education philosophy. He discussed the development of student autonomy as a success factor in the open education experience.

The principal of Marcy Open School and a group of parents with children at both Marcy Open School and the MUH 6-8 open school also visited the committee in February. They emphasized student input and the affective climate of the open classroom.

Despite the influences of these sources, some important aspects of the problem persisted throughout the committee's existence. Members could not internalize high student input into decision-making for content and the process of learning. The teaching experience of each committee member in the senior high school reflected their role as credentialed experts rather than the open education concept of the teacher as facilitator and influenced their overall planning, specifically their concern with accommodation of each discipline in the open classroom. Discussions of the difficulty of integrating "math" and "science" were a part of the committee's agenda late in the trimester.

Affect, so important to parents and the Marcy Open School principal, was almost completely ignored. The assistant-principal suggested an advisor/advisee relationship which subsequently was mentioned in the written documents. However, no provision was made for staff workshops or discussion groups to facilitate that aspect of open education philosophy. There was, in effect, a concerted effort to address the structure of the senior high school <u>first</u> and whatever aspects of an open education program they might develop had to conform to it.

On this issue, the committee exemplified the frustration of at least four teachers with traditional values, according to Spindler's analysis (1963), trying to address emergent values in dealing with a philosophy of education

foreign to them. They attempted to do this under the duress of no felt needs and no guidelines in their participatory role, both tenets for successful directed culture change (Spicer, 1952).

## Restrictions of the School Culture

The physical structure of Marshall-University High School imposes certain limitations on what occurs within its walls. The available space accommodates a prescribed number of students, teachers, administrators, and support personnel, and certain classrooms are equipped for specific functions. For example, classes are offered in clothing and woodshop but not electronics. The cultural organization of time and space within the institution is even more limited, by a recurring event—the schedule.

Bohannan (1963) discussed a functionalist model for social anthropology based on Malinowski's concept of the institution (1945) and added a time dimension called the event system.

> Only through repeated series of acts or events can purpose be achieved and various aspects of culture interrelated. That is to say, in order to achieve the desired ends, actors must be able to predict, within certain limits, the range of events that will normally follow other events. Therefore, acts must recur and must follow one another in an order that is substantially known to all. It is possible to elicit series of recurring events that carry out purposes and interrelate the various dimensions of human experience (Bohannan, 1963:359).

The event system that recurs at MUH is the establishment and implementation of the schedule. With the schedule, students know what space to occupy at what time, teachers know where they belong and what they are to be teaching,

and administrators know that everyone not where s/he belongs in accordance with the schedule is exhibiting deviant behavior that may require administrative attention.

During formulation of the schedule, change and adjustment are possible. As it becomes finalized even the principal finds change difficult. The culture of the school is such that predictability of "the range of events that will normally follow other events" is imperative.

The restrictions of the schedule and persistent deference to it influenced the open school committee. Instead of formulating an imaginative, flexible, fluid concept and conforming the still malleable master schedule for fall 1975 to it, there was immediate concern with accommodating the open school to the schedule. Time and space blocks were set up early in the planning with grades 11 and 12 occupying the open classroom in the morning and grades 9 and 10 occupying it in the afternoon. Students would fill out their day in traditional classrooms or one of the existing alternative programs. The open school schedule would be organized to accommodate upper division electives in the afternoon and lower division electives in the morning.

Projection of a population of sixty students for the open school was also an influence. One large open classroom with thirty students at a time was visualized thus limiting the open experience to a half-day for each group.

Another facet of the school culture that restricted the committee was the budget. Among other considerations, the budget dictated the

number of available positions, the number of staff in each department, and the courses that staff could teach. Budgetary concerns significantly influenced schedule planning.

The 9-12 open school at Marshall-University High was being initiated at a time of diminishing funds for SEA. Most committee members had previously been involved in planning and implementing new programs and courses in the senior high school when the budget was flush with federal funds. They had also watched some of these programs virtually disappear as funding was reduced, and their prior experience lessened their creativity in planning the open school. They expressed concern with the time wasted in planning and feared that either little they planned would be implemented or that what emerged would become a skeleton after federal monies were gone. They chose instead to design what they felt could address some aspects of open education from their perspective, while keeping a wary eye on the existing structure and paying enough homage to it to guarantee some longevity to the program. In the area of teacher/student ratio, the conflict between their perception of their "guarded" ideal and the real became evident. Even though the final document designated two full time teachers for the open school, the principal stated that there would only be one.

The evolution of two seniority lists complicated the budget, teacher, and schedule issues. The junior high school retained teachers with less seniority on the original roster for grades 6-12. The introduction of the two lists caused discontent among the senior high teachers who were eventually surplussed. This led to a legal ruling that if a teacher was placed on the junior high seniority list, s/he would have to teach at least 50% of the time in the junior high. This hampered the principal in maneuvering personnel.

Other restrictions with which the committee grappled were student evaluation, G.P.A., graduation requirements, college entrance, and how they would be met by an open school format. Reassurance came from the director of St. Paul Open School, the MUH 6-8 open school teacher, and a parent who taught in a private secondary free school that student evaluations and graduation requirements acceptable to the Minneapolis Public Schools could be formulated and met.

While some colleges and universities accept written descriptions of a student's progress in lieu of a grade, many place greater emphasis on entrance exams under these circumstances. This places a particularly difficult burden on the capable student who doesn't respond well to this type of testing. The committee was concerned with how to cope with this possibility.

Committee members felt the restrictions more as they moved from the philosophical grounding stage into more concrete planning. They felt it because of their own enculturation and the difficulty they experienced in trying to create a program in several ways antagonistic to that enculturation. Heightened conflict with the principal provoked greater frustration.

In the absence of an administrator cognizant of the need to help identify and modify the constrictions of numerous aspects of MUH's cultural organization, the committee did not have the means to address many of the needs of the open school. The few accommodations resembled Henry's (1966) description of a bureaucracy changing just enough to avoid going out of business. "Going out of business" in this case

would have meant no 9-12 open school and possible subsequent repercussions at the district and federal levels, which were an unknown element.

The ramifications of lack of visionary goals and long term planning at MUH are illustrated with the difficulty of trying to fit a "school within a school." Teachers separated into camps of educational ideology, and aspects of Bateson's (1935) schismogenesis appeared. Adherence to the school schedule and budget cutbacks in fall could have the effect of placing participant teachers in the untenable position of attempting to implement an open education philosophy for part of the day and returning to self-contained more traditional classrooms for the remainder.

Individual Priorities and Department Loyalties

The organization of teachers within the structure of a secondary school can be simplistically compared to a kinship system. For example, ego is a social science teacher and is a member, with other social science teachers, of a department or clan. Departments/clans are loosely grouped into moieties, the academic and the non-academic, of which ego is a member of the academic moiety.

As a new teacher, ego is quickly acculturated to the power (real and implied) wielded by the department chairperson. (S/he may have been instrumental in the hiring of ego.) The strength of the department, to some degree, depends on the loyalty of its "clan" members.

Prior to the merger, departments at Marshall High School were comparatively powerless, and the position of chairpersons was not sought.

In fact, teachers established a system whereby they assumed the chairpersons's duties in alphabetical order.

The merger created some changes. University High School departments were more politically astute, perhaps because of association with the University system. Professors at the University were often chairpersons at the lab school and with the merger the office of chairpersons became more prestigious.

The involvement of SEA and influx of federal monies sustained the importance and influence of departments. While some programs were interdisciplinary or involved special areas such as the TV studio and equipment, much of the time, effort and SEA monies at Marshall University High School were spread through departments for curriculum development.

Each member of the open school committee maintained a departmental allegiance. Two members were department chairpersons. Four of the five were in danger of being surplussed, and three of these four were deeply concerned. Individual priorities could not help but come into play. Those priorities sometimes acted as blinders and sometimes gave impetus to the members trying to develop a program in a philosophical milieu foreign to them.

Four committee members were of the academic "moiety." The art person was an unexplained after-thought and the appropriateness of art among all those "solids" was often questioned. She was the only member, however, with prior exposure to teaching in an open classroom through an art mini-class for the 6-8 open school. She was politically astute, having volunteered

and served on three SEA and city-wide councils and committees for 1974-75. (Her teaching position at MUH was precarious because of the declining funds, but she managed to survive.) She worked hard, read extensively about open education, talked with the 6-8 open school teachers for familiarity with their techniques, and volunteered to write committee drafts of the program and proposals for funds. The principal ultimately selected her as the only full time 9-12 open school teacher.

The math person altered his feelings towards open education, as a result of his exposure to open school philosophy during the committee's deliberations. He came to MUH at the time of the merger and had also been a Level I evaluator at MUH. That he was not dependent on his teaching salary gave him a certain independence with respect to administration concerns. However, the problem of fitting math into the thematic approach to an open classroom consistently troubled him to the end, because he believed that math was too sequential to be dealt with in this manner.

The math person's attitude also reflected strong departmental loyalties. The siphoning of personnel into the open school would reduce the number of teachers and courses that a department could offer, and lead to reduced enrollment within a department, less funds to manipulate, less power and prestige. The math department was a close cohesive group and possibly the most powerful department at MUH. The math person on the committee acknowledged in January that he was being surplussed and would not be at Marshall-University High School in the fall. Initially no one volunteered to be the open school math teacher, but a person was eventually enlisted—for only one hour a day to teach a theme-oriented mini course outside the open classroom.

The science person was the only member of the committee with job security. He had taught for forty-two years, including twenty-nine at Marshall High School and eventually Marshall-University High School. Even he was uncertain of being at the school in fall 1975. The school board was considering a new retirement schedule, and their favorable vote would enable the science person to become eligible for retirement (a prospect he welcomed). This teacher only minimally debated the open school program, for he had helped father OCLE and had painfully watched its demise.

Both the social studies and English persons remained negative towards the 9-12 open school throughout the committee's existence. Their departments were slated to be the hardest hit with reductions in staff. Their stance questioned the plausibility of open education for secondary students. They expressed difficulty in assuring acceptable curriculum content within the thematic approach. They pushed a single trimester open experience for those who wanted it and continually emphasized the traditional classroom and support for innovation within it. They were especially sensitive to maintenance of departmental offerings and perceived the open school as a threat to departmental strength and influence.

The social studies teacher was particularly vocal with respect to the value of structure in the classroom. The English teacher was concerned with teacher autonomy. He did not want to lay out any plans that would be imposed on those who would actually teach in the 9-12 open school. He seemed to put in his time, believing that little or naught would come of the planning and he would go back to the peace of this classroom, and was visibly shaken when he learned that he had been surplussed.

The participation of both of these teachers in the committee's efforts was reduced by the news of their discontinued employment at MUH after June 1975. In fact, the English teacher departed to work in the Urban Arts program spring trimester. The social studies teacher used the change in her status to challenge what she felt were poor procedures and hidden administrative agendas.

Foster's statement (1972) concerning departments and department chairpersons "preserving the system" was again made evident at Marshall-University High School with the reduction of federal monies. Protection of the "immediate kin" came first. There was no incentive (Erasmus, 1961) on the part of most of the committee members to move away from that system into alternative ways of looking at the structure.

The NIE had it initially acted in its role as a change agent in a manner comparable to the principles espoused by Goodenough (1963), a truly alternative secondary school could have emerged. Unfortunately, the method of introducing comprehensive change was to reinforce with monies the one institution (the department) that was most firmly entrenched and least likely to change (Foster, 1972). Use was made of departments as discretionary units to deal with alternatives at the senior high level. Most of the monies went into curriculum development resulting in enriched classes, but no all pervasive change to alternatives. As federal monies dwindled, the departments retrenched, continuing their resistance to change.

Two Administrators and Their Agendas

Contributing to the problems of the open school committee were input restraints, and individual agendas of the principal and assistant principal for the junior high school. The importance of people—students, parents, and teachers—influenced the assistant principal. The principal stressed the structure—schedule, budget, relationships to the NIE and Minneapolis Public Schools. In addition, each adminstrator had personal agendas that surfaced on occasion. The committee attempted to heed both the principal and assistant principal in their deliberations. They wanted some assurance that their efforts would gain fruition. As they got further into their task, they became increasingly apprehensive.

The initial indication that there was a difference in agendas came the first week of the committee's existence. The assistant principal met with the committee and stated that he saw his role as one of arranger of trips and informative guests, and a guide to "what will or won't work." He visualized the 9-12 open school tying in to the 6-8 open school and all of it being under his jurisdiction. (There was a general consensus that the senior high assistant principal had neither the experience nor the desire to be responsible for this alternative program.)

The next day, the principal stated that the 9-12 open school would probably be under the direction of the senior high assistant principal with perhaps a junior position of coordinator drawing the 6-12 open school experience together.

The committee viewed this as a mix-up in signals. They were at ground zero and had so much to contend with that this incident did not loom large.

In retrospect, however, it could be considered a foreshadow of events to come. Spring trimester, the principal instructed the assistant principal to discontinue active participation in the 9-12 open school planning.

The assistant principal in his career had risen from teacher to assistant to the superintendent in a large school district. He had elected to leave that political opportunity to come to Minneapolis and eventually to MUH to work with teachers and students. By his own admission, he had been a more structured person, but was now in harmony with the continuous progress alternative, and also saw the value of open education for some students. His first concern in sitting-in on the committee meetings was for the "clientele," the open school students. The logistics of the schedule and budget were not first priority. He was far more interested in a staff being chosen that wanted to teach in the open school. Three or four full time staff for the 9-12 open school to complement the three full time teachers in the junior high school were his recommendations. He also visualized the use of University students as interns to aid the staff in needed areas of expertise and record-keeping.

The assistant principal had had a siege of difficulties with Marcy Open School personnel and parents the previous year while working out the details for admittance of sixth graders to MUH. He was aware of the need to bridge the gap between the elementary and secondary staffs and teaching experience. He was also aware of the desire on the part of Marcy Open School educators and many parents to see the spirit of open education translated into the secondary milieu. They did not want to see open education forced to conform to the secondary structure to such an extent that it became a dysfunctioning hybrid. The opportunity of the 9-12 open

school to address the approaching city-wide need for secondary open education was viewed by these people as not only extending the open education of Marcy Open School students, but influencing open education throughout the city. In light of this and his personal concern that something substantial evolve from this committee's work, the input of the assistant principal stressed the affect of students and staff and conforming the structure to the needs of the concept.

The new principal at Marshall-University High School in the fall 1974 came into a particularly difficult position. He was faced with all the usual problems of learning the culture of the school. In addition, he was charged with surplussing staff, reducing expenditures, and developing a new program, the 9-12 open school. His background and experience testified that he was well-qualified to carry out the first two charges. The 9-12 open school was something else.

The principal did not express any understanding of open school philosophy in his sojourn with the committee. At one point he suggested that the 9-12 open school might be set up as an "in and out" tutorial situation. The open blocks of time that the committee developed were viewed by the principal as three periods with specific persons responsible for specific disciplines within those blocks. His whole approach when talking with the committee was to go into detail on tenths of positions and ways of maneuvering budget allocations.

An agenda that he promoted several times was the idea that open education was perhaps out of step with the times. Students and parents, he contended, were looking for more structure to assure college entrance.

The University-high school tie was later added to this with his suggestion of high school students opting to intern at the University for no course credit. Two advantages came to mind. Reduction of early graduates from the high school would favorably affect the budget which is tied to enrollment. Also, initiation of internships with professors could open up funding for such projects and help assure retention of positions at the University level.

Perhaps one of the greatest frustrations the committee had to deal with was looking to the principal for guidance in areas in which they knew he had decisive power, and being met with nothing definitive. This began to produce the "fun house" phenomena referred to earlier. What finally became apparent was that they couldn't formulate a program based on their original charge, because that charge had changed.

Expecting an individual to move from a very traditional position on Spindler's continuum (1963) to an emergent one to accommodate a federally funded program when those funds are running out, is to expect more than this principal was capable of doing. The incentives were not great enough (Erasmus, 1961). That left the committee with two potential "change" agents who were not communicating in regards to the direction of the change (Goodnough, 1963). As a result, the rift between them broadened (Bateson, 1935), carrying over into the spring trimester.

The Charge Keeps Changing

Just before Christmas, with the committee barely three weeks old, one member stated, "The whole problem is before us since open school at MUH can be what we want it to be...." That statement came while the principal's

charge to the committee was still fresh in their minds, and they felt that they were a decision-making body.

To review, in part the principal had charged them to:

1. Develop a program for 1975-76.
2. Plan for grades 9-12; grade or grades to be operationalized in 1975-76 to be the option of the committee.
3. Consider where students will come from, who will be teaching, what will be taught and incorporation of OCLE, AWARE, Independent Study as action-learning concepts.

It was decided almost from the first to go ahead and plan for grades 9-12 for fall 1975. Due to the increase in the number of sixth graders to enter MUH in the fall 1975, anticipated enrollment in the remaining grades, and the necessary space allocations for those students, the 9-12 open school would be hard-pressed to find a large enough area to house an open classroom. The committee, in light of this, visualized two blocks of time with students occupying the same territory, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Sixty students would provide a feasible student/teacher ratio of fifteen to one with a staff of four full time teachers. This was not unrealistic given the recent past in SEA, the present 6-8 open school, and the inauguration of a new program, especially in the one-to-one teaching situation that open school often became. The number of students that would opt for the open school was unknown and the committee arbitrarily decided on sixty, encompassing grades 9-12. This addressed part two of the principal's charge.

With this skeletal organization and some grounding in open education philosophy, the committee was ready to develop a more concrete program. The time period was the first week in January.

Two events occurred at this time to put into motion or perhaps start to unveil what a committee member later referred to as "the moving target." The director of SEA was traveling to Washington, D.C. to persuade the NIE that additional monies were needed to initiate the 9-12 open school at MUH. He requested a written progress report to strengthen his position. The principal encouraged the committee to this point and approved their progress report. This was, also, the time just prior to the announcement of surplussed staff.

When the director returned with the additional monies, the charge began to change. The committee was still to develop a program, but students were to be recruited from across the city. Southeast Minneapolis students could get first chance. If sixty students did not wish entrance from the southeast area, enrollment would be made up of students from other parts of the city.

The incorporation of AWARE, OCLE and Independent Study addressed the NIE's concern that these programs continue in some form. (OCLE in a name only form was presently under the workstudy coordinators.) The committee merely wrote them into the program, leaving the details to be worked out by the spring trimester committee of teachers assigned to the 9-12 open school. (This was prior to AWARE being placed on a one trimester basis—maybe—for 1975-76.)

The big stumbling block in completing the principal's charge was the section on consideration of who would teach and what would be taught. The manner in which the committee looked at the development of the program necessitated, in their minds, the need to know this information. Already

the committee's tentative recommendation of four full time teachers had been negated by the principal. The issue of accreditation now entered the deliberations. With fewer staff, the open school teachers needed to be accredited to teach in more than one area. Also, the committee reiterated several times that the people who taught in the open school should want this assignment. Their introduction to open education philosophy had convinced them of the need for teachers with the ability to move out of the traditional role in developing the open school. The director of SEA reinforced this when he visited the committee by stating that he hoped those who would teach were volunteers, compatible, and believed in open education.

This need to know the identity of the open school staff was continuously frustrated by the principal. Due to his priorities, he fenced with them while keeping tight reign on staff positions and budget information. He seemed embroiled in a chess game that affected the committee, but which he could not or would not share with them. The result was requests for clarification by the committee and diffusion tactics by the principal. At one meeting in mid-January the principal designed the following maze. The committee was told:

1. Chairpersons were deciding who wanted to be in open school from their departments.
2. The principal could tell chairpersons, if they came to him--yes, no, maybe--who was being surplussed.
3. The committee was not to consider staffing (part of the original charge).
4. The committee was to come up with a program that may, may not be implemented.
5. Staff came from shifting the plan.

6. The program the committee decides on can go with the people who are here.
7. There will not be two full time teachers.
8. Don't get "bogged down" on costs and people. Create the best you can.

The moving target phenomena persisted with the committee becoming progressively more frustrated and disillusioned. By the last half of February they were involved in drafting their final paper on their recommendations for the open school. They felt that they had had neither guidelines nor carte blanche. [The staff and the number of hours of involvement in the open school were never definitely stated by the principal.] At the end of the trimester, he was still alluding to the chairpersons' making the decisions based on the wishes of the staff in their departments.

The committee decided to write up their program despite the moving target. They did not express surprise, just disappointment. There were feelings of being used as a front for decision-making so that it could be said that "teachers, parents, and students" participated. A week before the end of the trimester they disbanded themselves, handed in their final product—a preliminary plan for the open school—and canceled a dinner meeting previously arranged by the principal. "We didn't feel that we had anything to celebrate."

If the statement can be made that the principal was an extension of the NIE regarding guidance and implementation of the additional budget allotment for that purpose, then he possibly could be regarded as a change agent. Regarding the potential staff, open school students, and their

parents as the client community, he was ill-fitted for the change agent role as proposed by Goodenough (1963).

In his dealings with the committee, the principal was particularly insensitive to their need for consistency regarding proposals and procedures (Goodenough, 1963). They attempted to complete the original charge, but met instead with changing unclear agendas.

## VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The formal doctrine of the Southeast Alternatives espouses choice through the availability of alternative schools which implement differing modes of education (SEA 1971-76 Comprehensive Plan, 1973). That choice is extended K-12 and therefore includes Marshall-University High, the only secondary school in southeast Minneapolis for contemporary, continuous progress, and open education students. While nongraded classes have met the needs of contemporary and continuous progress students, choice has not been available for open education students 9-12 at MUH prior to fall 1975, the final year of the project.

Four years of federal funding have produced changes within the curriculum of the senior high. They have also produced three or four small innovative programs and a TV studio. Some of these programs have already faded out. (More will do so in the final year of the project.) By fall 1974, external as well as internal pressures demanded that MUH fulfill its responsibility to the Southeast Alternatives and embark on yet another new program, the 9-12 open school.

This study has concentrated on introduction of culture change, the resistance that accompanied that introduction in a secondary school, and the relationship of that resistance to the process of change.

The committee delegated to initiate culture change through the inception of the 9-12 open school was handicapped from the start. They had been coerced into the task and were not, for the most part, philosophically sympathetic to the educational program they were attempting

to implement. There was no felt need (Spicer, 1952) for 9-12 open school by the committee or the principal. They unwillingly had been co-opted into the change process.

In addition to the influence of their personal reservations and priorities, the committee's efforts were shaped by the existing cultural organization of the secondary school. The schedule, budget, personnel, and departments with their set curricula, remained intact. Time was modified slightly and spatial rearrangement was planned for the open school.

Attention to affect and the important aspects of open education such as high student input and teacher role change to facilitator were not internalized by the majority of committee members. They were attempting to implement a program with no commitment to it, or even much knowledge of what open education entailed.

An on-site change agent, providing guidance, was virtually non-existent. The principal was willing to consider whatever the committee could manage to develop in spite of the vagaries, and within the constraints he created.

The committee was conceived under perhaps the worst possible circumstances for successful culture change. Success here is defined as the establishment of a 9-12 open school with optimum concern for the affective as well as the academic climate of the classroom through: (1) staffing with compatible teachers committed to open education; (2) adherence to Bussis and Chittenden's (1972) model of high student and high teacher input; (3) cooperation and empathy of the administrator

for the program; (4) adequate budget for sufficient staff to teach only in the open school with aides and volunteers; (5) staff development and team time to evaluate methods and strengthen the teaching effort; and (6) adequate space and materials to stock the open classroom. It is to the committee's credit that they were able to weather, to the extent that they did, the cultural, personal, and administrative problems that beset them, and managed to come up with an operable program.

This study is an exploration of the problems and the process. That process was continued spring trimester in the hands of the teachers who had been "selected" to teach in the 9-12 open school during fall 1975. They proceeded to develop curriculum and procedure. The art person, as "lead" or full time teacher, acquired some aspects of a change agent. She incorporated the client community of students and concerned parents into the planning. The process of change continues as the 9-12 open school begins operation this fall.

## Thoughts for the Future

The impact of this study should point to and reinforce the need for knowledge of the culture and planned procedures for introducing culture change into a school. A distant change agent, such as the National Institute of Education, can not expect maximum results from its monies, with reference to directed change, without consideration of the uniqueness of the client community.

Pincus and Weiler (1973) in a Rand Corporation study prepared for the National Institute of Education have (as a partial list) come to the

following conclusions concerning incentives for educational innovation:

1. Potential innovators should be given opportunities to consider what changes are desirable, encouraged in the changes, and protected from unfavorable repercussions.
2. Administrators should be aided in attempting innovative programs by techniques of planning to reduce risk and failure.
3. Teachers need to feel that participation in innovations will not isolate them from their colleagues (Pincus and Weiler, 1973:49-51).

Each of these conclusions centers around a client community of teachers and administrators operating in a school culture. All three address the kinds of criteria Goodenough (1963) had laid out in his principles. The majority of the community must see the goals of the innovation as beneficial to them; they must actively take part in and help plan the innovation. Each step in the plan must make sense to the community (1963:22-23). This type of criteria for culture change was not demanded at the onset of the Experimental Schools Program. That is especially evident at Marshall-University High School.

Marshall-University High School had gone through several traumatic years of change prior to the establishment of SEA. While the elementary schools were enthusiastic and the Free School virtually owed its existence to SEA, MUH was, for the most part, reserved as far as the Experimental Schools Program was concerned. Teachers at MUH recall their first awareness of SEA as follows:

> It was about May, 1971, and [the director-principal] called a meeting of all the teachers. He said, "We got it." We looked at one another and said, "We got what?" His reply was, "We got the proposal funded. Now we can do anything we want."

Most of those teachers were unaware of the proposal, the project, or their proposed participation in it. (At least that is how they remember it.)

A small cluster of teachers and administrators sympathetic to the idea and the philosophy of alternatives did, however, rally around the director-principal of MUH in the initial stages of the proposal writing and continued to support him as he moved into the position of director of SEA. According to staff of that era, a clash of personalities and educational philosophies created tensions between the director of SEA and his former assistant-principal who was named principal of MUH in the first year of the project. (The director of SEA evidently did not have the power within the Minneapolis Public Schools to dislodge this administrator from MUH and restaff with someone committed to alternatives.) The disharmony between them seemed to manifest itself in a state of lethargy concerning implementation of alternatives at the secondary level. The former Marshall High School teachers looked upon the money as a chance to enhance their departments. Each year saw fewer and fewer former University High School personnel. (Fall 1975, teachers tell me that there is only one University High teacher remaining—in the math department.) Lacking leadership committed to a truly alternative high school and a high percentage of staff echoing that lethargy, it is not surprising that MUH has made its most radical changes when pressured from outside, and that it has changed only enough "to keep from going out of business."

The K-12 concept was implied from the beginning, and long-range planning accommodating the criteria set forth by both Pincus and Weiler (1973), and Goodenough (1963) was possible at MUH. Instead, in the fourth year of the project with money running out, the immediate need to address the open education concept at the senior high level suddenly appeared. Had the program been planned earlier when there was more time and money, there would have been greater incentive for participation by all concerned (Erasmus, 1961). Instead, the 9-12 open school met with far less than enthusiastic support from staff and administration. The survival of the program, in any form, will probably be dependent on the needs of the city-wide area for a senior high open school and on the leverage parents can maintain on the district after the exit of the National Institute of Education.

Culture change is inevitable. The direction it takes, regarding schools, can be researched, laid out, and implemented with long-term planning based on participation and needs of the school community. Federal and state governments, as well as other funding agencies, have a responsibility to the client communities and the general public to establish procedures that address these concerns.

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